

(c) a participant locator which associates a participant with an identifier entered when the participant logs into any one of a plurality of workstations, whereby a call to initiate a videoconference with first participant is routed to the workstation at which the participant is logged in.


3. The teleconferencing system of claim 2 further comprising:

(a) a services directory for tracking the audio and video capabilities associated with each workstation, whereby a call, from a second to the first participant, and including a request for a service with respect to a first participant, is processed based on which capabilities associated with the first participant.

4. The teleconferencing system of claim 3 further comprising:

(a) a plurality of switches, in communication with the AV and data paths, each switch being operable to put at least one workstation in communication with both the AV and data paths, whereby a teleconference can be established between any two or more participants out of a total pool of at least 100 participants.

5. The teleconferencing system of claim 4 wherein at least two of the switches are geographically dispersed and the AV and data paths are defined by at least one Wide Area Network.



6. The teleconferencing system of claim 2 further comprising:

(a) an AV signal switcher for receiving and routing the AV signals to an intended location;
and

(b) at least one AV reproduction device with associated capabilities of reproducing audio and/or video signals at a workstation and for addressing a request for reproduction services generated at a workstation, wherein the AV conference manager includes a directory of each AV reproduction device and its associated capabilities, whereby a request for a reproduction service, generated at a workstation, is processed by the AV conference manager to cause an appropriate AV reproduction device to provide the requested reproduction service to the workstation.

7. The teleconferencing system of claim 6 wherein the AV conference manager, in processing the request, associates a plurality of different capabilities, of at least one AV reproduction device, to cause the providing of the requested reproduction service, according to ~~a predetermined order of capabilities,~~

8. The teleconferencing system of claim 7 further comprising:

(a) at least one interface for interfacing between the AV conference manager and an external AV reproduction device.

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9. The teleconferencing system of claim 8 further comprising:

(a) a user interface for enabling the first participant to select a capability associated with the external AV reproduction device, whereby the AV conference manager causes the providing of an AV reproduction service to the workstation associated with the first participant.

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10. The teleconferencing system of claim 2 further comprising:

(a) signal format conversion means for converting signals of one format to another format, whereby the teleconferencing system can support capture and reproduction devices based on different signal format standards.

11. A method of conducting a teleconference among a plurality of participants having workstations with associated monitors for displaying visual images, and with associated AV capture and reproduction capabilities for capturing and reproducing video images and spoken audio of the participants, the workstations being interconnected by a first network, the network providing a data path for carrying digital data signals among the workstations, the method system comprising the steps of:

(a) carrying AV signals representing video images and spoken audio of the participants along an AV path among the workstations;

(b) managing a videoconference during which the video image and spoken audio of one of the participants is reproduced at the workstation of another of the participants;

- (c) associating a participant with an identifier entered when the participant logs into any one of a plurality of workstations; and
- (d) routing a call to initiate a videoconference with first participant to the workstation at which the participant is logged in; and

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising the steps of:

- (a) tracking the audio and video capabilities associated with each workstation; and
- (b) processing a call, from a second to the first participant, and including a request for a service with respect to a first participant, based on which capabilities associated with the first participant.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing at least one AV reproduction device with associated capabilities of reproducing at least audio or video signals at a workstation;
- (b) defining at least one directory of AV reproduction devices and each devices associated capabilities; and
- (c) processing a request for a reproduction service to cause an appropriate AV reproduction device to provide the requested reproduction service to the workstation.

13. The method of claim 12 further comprising the step of:

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(a) interfacing between the AV conference manager and an external AV reproduction device.

14. The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of:

(a) converting signals of one format to another format to enable the teleconferencing system to support capture and reproduction devices based on different signal format standards.

REMARKS

This application is a 35 U.S.C § 121 divisional application of parent United States patent application 08/131,523, filed October 1, 1993. The claims in this application correspond in part to the claims in Group IV defined in a Restriction/Election requirement in the parent application.